

LEVEL 7

[OMEGA PROTOCOL]

**EXTREME
PREJUDICE**



RULES

LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]: *Extreme Prejudice* includes new components and missions in the continuing desperate struggle between the forces of the United States government and Dr. Cronos. The story of *Extreme Prejudice* takes players through the experiences of Tin Man Team once they finally track the Ghin leader to his hiding place following the destruction of Subterra Bravo.

In these missions you will be playing as either the commandos infiltrating a Russian base or as Dr. Cronos attempting to thwart them. Both sides bring dangerous new weapons to the battle.

THE STORY SO FAR

It has been two years since the destruction of Subterra Bravo. Two years since the noble sacrifice of Disco Team and the escape of the nefarious Ghin scientist Dr. Cronos. In the immediate aftermath of those events, the Strategic Scientific Agency initiated a worldwide manhunt for the dangerous Ghin fugitive, using every resource at its disposal, and the manhunt continues.

The SSA has remained unwilling to reveal the existence of aliens, the U.S. government's cooperation with Cronos, or just how close the entire world came to being infected by a Ghin-generated plague. Terrified of what could happen should another foreign power ally with Cronos and gain access to Ghin technology, the Agency's urgent and ultimate goal is to capture Cronos and recover the remaining alien technology in his possession.

After numerous false leads and cold trails, the SSA has finally tracked Cronos to an otherwise unremarkable Russian military facility. Determined not to lose their quarry again and knowing full well the horrors that likely wait within, the Agency dispatches an elite covert strike team armed with the latest available weaponry and technology. Included on this team a very unlikely ally: the former rogue Ghin known as Thoth, who has his own score to settle with the good doctor.



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COMPONENT DESCRIPTIONS

PLASTIC FIGURES

Highly detailed miniatures representing the new commandos and enemies.



COMMANDO CHARACTER SHEETS



STANCE CARDS

Three unique stance cards for each new commando.



DOWNED CARD

A new downed card for the MEATSAC Operator commando.



DOWNED MARKERS

A unique downed marker for each new commando in this expansion.



KIT CARDS

Unique kit cards for the two new commandos, an added kit card for each of the five original commandos, and new cards to include in the common kit deck.



MOVE TOKENS

New move tokens to track commandos' exertion and exhaustion during each round.



STAT CARDS

A stat card for each new enemy and an alternate stat card for each enemy in the core game.

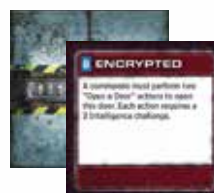
OVERSEER DASHBOARD PIECES

New dashboard pieces giving the overseer more enemies and abilities to use against commandos.



MAP TILES

Map tiles for the five new missions in *Extreme Prejudice*.



DOOR MARKERS

Additional door markers that can be used in any *Omega Protocol* mission.



INVESTIGATE CARDS

New cards to be shuffled into the Investigate deck for all missions.



ROOM CARDS

New room cards specific to the five expansion missions.



OBJECTIVE TILES

Two additional objective tiles to be used in the new missions.

MAP ELEMENT MARKERS

New and additional map element markers.



1. Rubble Marker 2. Clone Nest Marker 3. Barricade Marker
4. Peril Marker 5. Wall Marker

OPTIONAL KIT POINT DIFFICULTY ADJUSTMENTS

Commando players who want a greater challenge when playing with a larger squad can use the following kit card point totals when building their characters.

THREE COMMANDOS	FOUR COMMANDOS	FIVE COMMANDOS
6 KIT POINTS EACH	5 KIT POINTS EACH	4 KIT POINTS EACH

NEW CORE RULES

Extreme Prejudice includes a number of new rules and components that add to those presented in the *LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]* core game.

NEW SETUP RULES

Some components in this expansion, such as the map tiles and room cards, are used only in the new missions, but many components are intended for use in **any** *LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]* game. All cards in this expansion are marked with the icon to distinguish them from core game components.

Shuffle the new Investigate cards into the Investigate deck and add the new kit cards to the proper decks. Rules for the other components that can be used in any mission are given below.

STAT CARDS

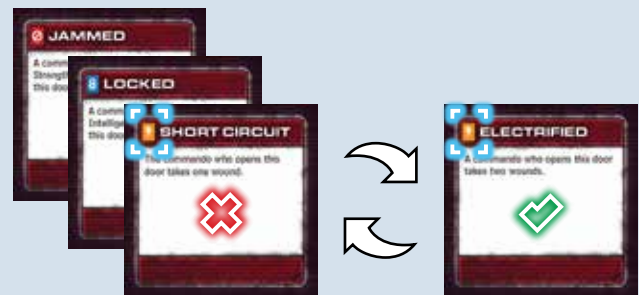
This expansion includes new stat cards for the enemies introduced in the new missions as well as alternate stat cards for all enemies from the core game. When building the reserves for a mission that calls for an enemy from the core game, the overseer can choose to use either the original card or the alternate card. Unused stat cards are returned to the box before the game begins.

ALTERNATE DOORS

Extreme Prejudice includes three new door markers: Wrecked , Encrypted , and Electrified . Each of these alternate doors shares an icon with a door from the core game. Each mission lists the core game

USING ALTERNATE DOORS

For EP Mission 1, the setup rules call for three passkey doors and give the overseer “access to one Locked, one Jammed, and one Short Circuit door.” The overseer wants to use an alternate door in this mission. He can choose from all three alternate doors because they all share an icon with a listed door. He replaces the Short Circuit door with the Electrified door, then returns all unused doors to the box.



door markers (Jammed, Locked, Short Circuit) the overseer can use. During setup, the overseer can choose to replace *one* of the listed door markers with an alternate door marker that shares the same icon.

ALTERNATE DASHBOARD PIECES

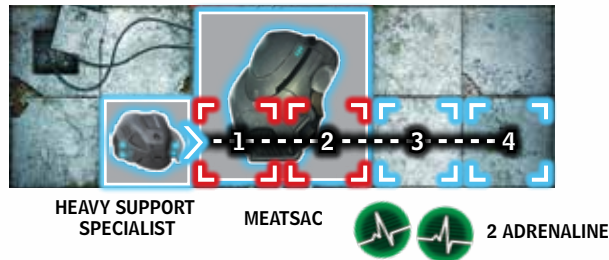
Extreme Prejudice introduces three new standard dashboard pieces plus

an alternate dashboard piece labeled Explosion, which can replace a Cave In dashboard piece in any mission. When building the dashboard for a mission, the overseer can trade any listed piece for its alternate piece. The unused dashboard piece is returned to the box.

NEW GAMEPLAY RULES

This expansion includes the following new rules that permanently modify the core rules in the *LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]* rulebook.

MAKING A COMBINED MOVE



The Heavy Support Specialist wants to move past the MEATSAC Operator. One move action will not allow him to move completely past the larger model's base, and a commando cannot end a move action in the same space as another figure. Heavy Support instead uses a combined move action to take two move actions as a single action, which allows him to end his move action in an unoccupied space. This combined move action costs the Heavy Support Specialist two adrenaline.

COMBINED MOVE

The **combined move** rule modifies the standard move action rules for commandos. Rather than taking a single move as an action, a commando can make a combined move. When making a combined move action, a commando takes any number of move actions together as one action. The adrenaline cost for a combined move action is equal to the total cost of the individual move actions it includes.

MOVE TOKENS AND EXHAUSTION

The new **move tokens** are used to track each commando's level of exhaustion—the energy drain and fatigue experienced during a turn as a result of exertion. Every commando starts the mission with three move tokens. Each time a commando takes a move action, one of his move tokens is flipped from the blue side (blue circle with a white 'X') to the red side (red circle with a white 'X'). As long as a commando has a blue move token available to flip, the move action has the normal adrenaline cost. Once all of a commando's move tokens have been flipped to the red side, a move action costs the commando one additional adrenaline.

Commando abilities that grant free move actions instead reduce the cost of move actions by one, to a minimum of zero. When taking move actions that cost zero adrenaline, a commando must still flip a move token from the blue side to the red side.

Example: When the rifleman uses his Double Time stance to take the first

NEW COMMANDO RANKS

Use this updated rank list when determining

TEAM LEADER
COUNTERMEASURES SPECIALIST
MEATSAC OPERATOR
HEAVY SUPPORT SPECIALIST
RIFLEMAN
RECONNAISSANCE SPECIALIST
GHIN COMMANDO



M.E.A.T.S.A.C.
MECHANIZED EXO-ARMOR
TACTICAL SYSTEM
FOR ADVANCED COMBAT

move action during his turn, he flips one move token from blue to red even though he does not increase his adrenaline.

When using a combined move action, a commando must flip a move token for every move action included in the combined move action.

During the Timer Phase of each round, all move tokens with the red side up are flipped to the blue side.

FIGURE SIZES

For clarity, *Extreme Prejudice* introduces names for figure sizes. Figures with bases the size of one space are referred to as **small figures**, and figures with square bases the size of four spaces are **large figures**.

LARGE FIGURES AND SQUEEZING

SQUEEZING THROUGH



The overseer wants to move the brute to attack the commando. The brute's Speed of 4 is not enough to reach the commando unless the brute squeezes through the small gap between the walls. The brute uses an additional point of movement the first time part of its base moves into a wall space.

PROLOGUE

They're hiding in plain sight this time.

While anyone on any of the three teams would have reason to doubt the Agency's intel—it's the third time they've been told they'll find Cronos in a hidden facility, after all—Major Vicks is the one who finally wonders aloud what the Russian black ops team is thinking.

As Dunn walks along beside him, finishing the last checks on the systems of her armor suit, he mutters, "If we assume they have him—and I think that might be a stretch, by the way—then the Russian government's got itself a tiger by the tail here if they're sanctioning this."

Dunn grunts into her headset. They are moving through a dark forest; thin trees blur together in the shadows like misshapen ghosts around them. Lion team has split off to take up a position as backup less than a click along the edge of the woods, and now Tin Man is on its own.

"Maybe the tail's on something bigger than a tiger," she says over their private channel. She half-turns so she can see the six other soldiers in the Tin Man extraction team, all strangers to her—especially the alien Thoth. "That's why the Russian government isn't trying to stop us. I bet that Ghin Thoth knows what we're getting into. He was with them, now he's with us. How does the Agency know he's not guiding us into a trap?"

Vicks had had the exact same thought when he and Dunn met with Deputy Director Fallows from the Agency just that morning. He had only been informed of his meeting with Fallows the day before, but that was nothing new—he had long ago become accustomed to the Agency's SOP of keeping everything on a need-to-know basis until information was absolutely necessary. Given the lack of any whispers on the rumor mill, he had suspected this operation would be a game-changer.

He arrived in the briefing room to find it devoid of the usual guards and admins who accompanied Fallows everywhere he went. This was only the third time Vicks had spoken with the deputy director in person, but he knew well the hive of activity that followed every senior Agency member around the offices. Its absence made him markedly uncomfortable. Fallows looked, if anything, bored.

As Vicks settled into one of the chairs, he looked over at the only other person in the room with them—a female officer with the distinctive demeanor of a combat operative. He recognized the tension in her eyes that had become all too familiar to him over his years of working with the SSA. It was the look shared by every operative he'd known who had been trained in the repugnant business of using Ghin psychotronic gear.

"Major Vicks, this is Chief Warrant Officer Celeste Dunn," Fallows said. "As of now, she's on your team."

"You're replacing Cheung, then, sir?" Vicks tried to keep his tone neutral and calm. He had been working with the same team for over a year now, and integrating a new member on short notice is always a challenge.

Fallows raised an eyebrow. That's right, Vicks thought. I can tell just looking at her. I know what she's trained for.

"No," Fallows answered. "Your team is being expanded. Chief Dunn is not a countermeasures specialist."

Fallows pushed a button on the console in front of him, and at the far end of the room a white screen descended. He studiously ignored Vicks' expression of concern as the images began to play across the screen. "What you are looking at represents the culmination of years of research and experimentation. We call it the Mechanized Exo-Armor Tactical System for Advanced Combat. Dunn will be its first operator."

The silent footage on the screen showed a large humanoid shape—something between a suit of armor and a tank—thundering across a test range. It moved with much more grace than Vicks imagined something that size should, but the camera recording it shook nonetheless. Then the machine stopped and raised both arms. What Vicks thought were modified M18 assault rifles slid into position on its forearms and released a hail of gunfire into a target some fifty yards away. As Vicks began to turn toward Fallows with a question, the camera swung unexpectedly to a viewpoint directly behind the machine. A burst of mini-rockets erupted from a launcher on the suit's shoulder, shredding multiple targets arrayed in front of it. Vicks forgot his question entirely and stared at the sudden destruction.

When the footage ended, Fallows retracted the screen, which made a soft whining noise as it disappeared into the ceiling. The three of them sat in eerie silence. Finally, the deputy director spoke, his tone oddly casual.

"Your group is also getting new team designations for this mission. It's all in the intel packet you'll be receiving in transit. This operation is on an accelerated timeline. And there is one other member of your team you need to meet."

Neither Vicks nor Dunn spoke. He knows we're not going to like this, Vicks thought.

Fallows took a deep breath and pressed another button on his console: "Send him in."

The door at the end of the conference room opened. Instantly, more from instinct than conscious thought, Vicks rose smoothly to his feet and his right hand dropped to his hip, to the sidearm holstered there. But Fallows had already moved between Vicks and the thing that had just joined them, extending his hand to it.

Almost like he doesn't know it's a Ghin, Vicks thought.

The alien crossed to meet the deputy director, who said, "Major Vicks, Chief Dunn . . . meet Dr. Thoth."

Vicks slowly moved his hand away from his gun, but he could feel the hostility eating away at his tolerance. He had personally participated in the Omega Protocol operations at Subterra Alpha; he knew what the Ghin were capable of. He also knew the lengths the SSA had gone to in order to kill or capture them. While he had never faced a Ghin himself, he had read reports from other teams, and as far as he knew, all of the remaining Ghin had gone rogue with Cronos. To suddenly be standing in the same room with one, after preparing for the last year and a half to apprehend or kill them on site, was more than unnerving.

"What are we doing here, sir?" Vicks said. "I thought—"

"Every move in a chess game changes the board," Fallows said, and when Dunn made a dismissive noise, he looked over at her and raised one finger as if to chide her. "Dr. Thoth is with us now. The enemy of my enemy and all that. But what it comes down to is this: you're on the same side when you need each other to survive."

Thoth said nothing—it was as if they were speaking of someone else entirely—but his presence in the room was somehow more commanding than the deputy director's. Fallows proceeded to explain the need for Thoth in a complicated rush of pseudo-scientific jargon that, in Vicks' opinion, could be summarized with one familiar term: hive mind. Once they were close enough, Fallows said, Thoth could lead them straight to the elusive Dr. Cronos. He then brought Vicks and Dunn up to date on the hunt for Cronos and where previous dead-ends had led the SSA. His briefing ended with satellite photos of the unassuming facility in Russia.

"All respect, sir," Vicks finally said, "but what makes this location more certain than any of the other places you've looked?"

"We're certain, Major," Fallows answered. "That's all you need to know."

Vicks glanced at Dunn, whose face had gone flush. When she asked for permission to speak freely, he knew she was about to bring up Disco Team.

"Is this a suicide mission, sir?" she asked Fallows. "Isn't that what happened to Disco when it all came crumbling down on their last mission? Didn't Cronos ultimately get them all killed?"

Fallows' expression didn't change. "That's all classified, as I'm sure you already know. But as to your initial question, Dunn, no—we don't send our resources on 'suicide missions.' That's just a term used by soldiers who think they're going to fail."

Dunn started to respond, but Vicks managed to catch her eye before she did. He shook his head. You're not going to gain anything here.

"Well then," she said, "I guess it's just another homicide mission after all, sir. I'm sure our new friend here"—she indicated Thoth—"won't let anything happen to us resources."

Thoth was looking at Dunn, but Vicks couldn't read the alien's features any more than he could read Fallows'.

"Dr. Thoth will get you to Cronos," the deputy director said. "But whatever happens to you after he does is in your hands, not his."

Hard to believe that was only this morning. Now, as the team moves as stealthily as possible through the trees toward the Russian facility, Vicks lets Dunn's question slide. It wouldn't help to admit that he's no more sure of Thoth's motives than she is, let alone share his opinion that this batshit-crazy alien Cronos they're hunting is as unpredictable as an A-bomb—and about as discriminating. In fact, Vicks is pretty sure if Cronos knew they were coming, he'd happily take out the entire Russian military outpost just to kill Tin Man team. Burn down the house to kill the fly, he thinks, remembering an old cartoon from when he was a boy.

A genderless voice in their headsets confirms that Scarecrow team is in now position. Vicks memorizes Scarecrow's call sequence as the voice repeats it; as soon as Cronos is in Tin Man's custody, the call sequence will bring the evac team, even if Tin Man is only two steps ahead of the entire Russian army.

Dunn's mic picks up something she mutters angrily under her breath, her frustration directed not at Vicks but at the new armor suit she's operating. He'd been envious of the thing at first, but then Cheung had filled him in on the gritty details—cerebral implants, direct musculature wiring, the sheer intrusiveness of the alien technology—and he knew envy wasn't the appropriate response.

"You all right, Dunn? MEATSAC giving you trouble?" he says to her. She's rolling the spin assembly above the mounted rifle on her left arm as if it were sticking. Vicks doesn't help; he'd been specifically told not to touch the contraption unless he had a couple million dollars to replace whatever he broke.

"I hate this thing's name," Dunn answers.

"It's a lousy acronym, all right. You can take it up with Fallows, if you like. I'm sure he named the son of a—"

"Yeah, well, it sounds like 'body bag.'" She takes a long stride forward, and one of the leg struts self-adjusts to keep her balanced. "I don't want to be called 'meat' until I'm dead."

They begin to descend a ridge into the valley beyond. Vicks gestures to the others, and Cheung, Halestrom, Deburgh, and Ford spread out in a checkerboard pattern so a single sniper can't target any two of them. Thoth assumes his own position closer to Ford on point, and no one questions him. Dunn picks up her tempo as they emerge from the tree line, the lights of Vladivostok in the distant south.

On every satellite image of the Primorsky Krai region, this outpost had appeared to be a typical military base—standard Russian Backfire bombers and hardened aircraft shelters—though security seemed unusually lax. In the end it was the minimal troop movement around the base that led the Agency to zero in on it. Hiding in plain sight.

Then rumors suggested Cronos had allied with Russian black ops specialists to share Ghin technology, and further scanning revealed possible psychotronic activity at the base. It was also shielded—overshielded, Vicks had been told—to a degree that suggested whatever was in there was more secret than Russian nuclear launch codes.

And now it comes to this.

Vicks gives the order, and his team assumes combat readiness. He hefts his own gun and seals his helmet. Camera feeds push back the darkness so he can see what might be waiting for them.

"Lion for Tin Man," he hears in his helmet, "good luck. Backup here if you need us."

"We won't need you," Dunn responds for him, and Vicks smiles at her technical insubordination. He hopes they'll live to discuss it later on.



EP MISSION 1: GETTING OVER THE RAINBOW

Inside the black ops facility less than thirty minutes, the team faces their first real obstacle—a sealed metal containment door. At the same time, they lose radio contact with the external teams. The signal has been sporadic as they move deeper into the facility, but now it disappears entirely. Vicks spends a couple of minutes trying to raise the others, then pauses in the sickly blue fluorescent light of the empty concrete corridor and switches over to the sub-frequency emergency channel.

"We're being jammed," he says. "Tin Man, check in."

Deburgh, Ford, and Halestrom all quickly confirm, but Vicks halts the entire team to wait for the rest of the check-ins so they can all discuss how to deal with the door. Looking over at Dunn, he wonders how hard it is to operate that heavy armored suit. Given all that advanced Ghin technology, he'd assumed it would be fluid, responding as quickly as thought. He decides it's best not to distract her with his musings.

"I am here," a voice says in his helmet, making his shoulders stiffen. Thoth's English is good, though his alien accent is something Vicks imagines a great white shark might have if it were given the gift of speech.

"Online," says Dunn. Vicks can almost hear her lips curling at the sound of Thoth's voice.

Cheung cuts in before Vicks can ask her if she's all right in her metal body bag: "Yo, I'm here. So, I guess they know we're here too, huh? They're locking their doors, and no doorbells. Go figure."

Thoth is slinking back up the corridor toward them. Vicks sighs. He knows their Ghin ally has a type of hive-mind connection to the other Ghin, a bloodhound-like sense for where Tin Man will find Dr. Cronos, but that won't matter if Thoth gets them all killed by charging along recklessly at his own pace.

Vicks is opening his mouth to ask Thoth where he's going when the Ghin says, "We have been found."

Vicks reacts instantly, raising his rifle and scanning the area. For a moment he thinks Thoth must mean something else—maybe the alien's English isn't as good as he thought. Or maybe he's just wrong. There are no sirens or alarm bells, no flashing red lights, no Russians in dark camouflage uniforms storming from hidden passageways to surround the team. At this moment, everything still seems secure.

And then it isn't.

The Russian soldiers charging at them close off any possibility of retreat or escape. Where they've come from, Vicks can't say—and right now it doesn't matter. They're armed with assault rifles, most upgraded with optical sights.

"How nice. Here come the keys," says Dunn in his ear.

"Kill them quickly," Thoth says suddenly. "We will have a new enemy soon."

"What is it?" Vicks asks, but the time for talking is past. The Russians attack. By the time he draws a bead on the first of the soldiers, Dunn has already opened up with both of the rifles mounted on her armor. The rest of the team follow suit, Halestrom bellowing almost joyfully as he sweeps the area with his M62 "Bull."

I hope we don't accidentally shoot Thoth. Vicks thinks as he prepares for the recoil of his own gun and pulls the trigger. If he can sense them coming, we're definitely going to need him.

SITREP

Tin Man Team has been sent on a covert op to infiltrate a Russian facility that intel indicates could be the new base of Dr. Cronos. The place is crawling with human soldiers, but no evidence of Ghin activity is visible. As the team moves deeper into the base, they discover an entrance to what appears to be a large underground complex. The team's countermeasures specialist is picking up strange interference on his psychotronic gear, which may mean the Agency has finally caught up with Cronos.

SETUP

Build the map according to the EP Mission 1 Setup diagram.

RESERVES



ROGUE CLONES: 8



GUARDS: 10



FEAR HUNTERS: 1

DOOR MARKERS

This mission uses the A, B, and C passkey doors. Three passkey zones are marked on the map. Passkey doors must be placed in these zones, and only one passkey door can be used in each zone.

In addition to the passkey doors, the overseer has access to one Locked, one Jammed, and one Short Circuit door.

ENERGY POOL MINIMUM

The number of commandos times two.

ROOM STACKS

Make the following eight room stacks:

- GUARD STATION, CLEAR
- ARMED RESPONSE, VENT
- HUNTING PARTY, CORROSIVE GAS
- FLANKING PARTY, RUBBLE
- FAULTY INTEL, FLANKING PARTY
- ARMED RESPONSE, CLEAR
- CORROSIVE GAS, CLONE NEST
- ARMED RESPONSE, EMI

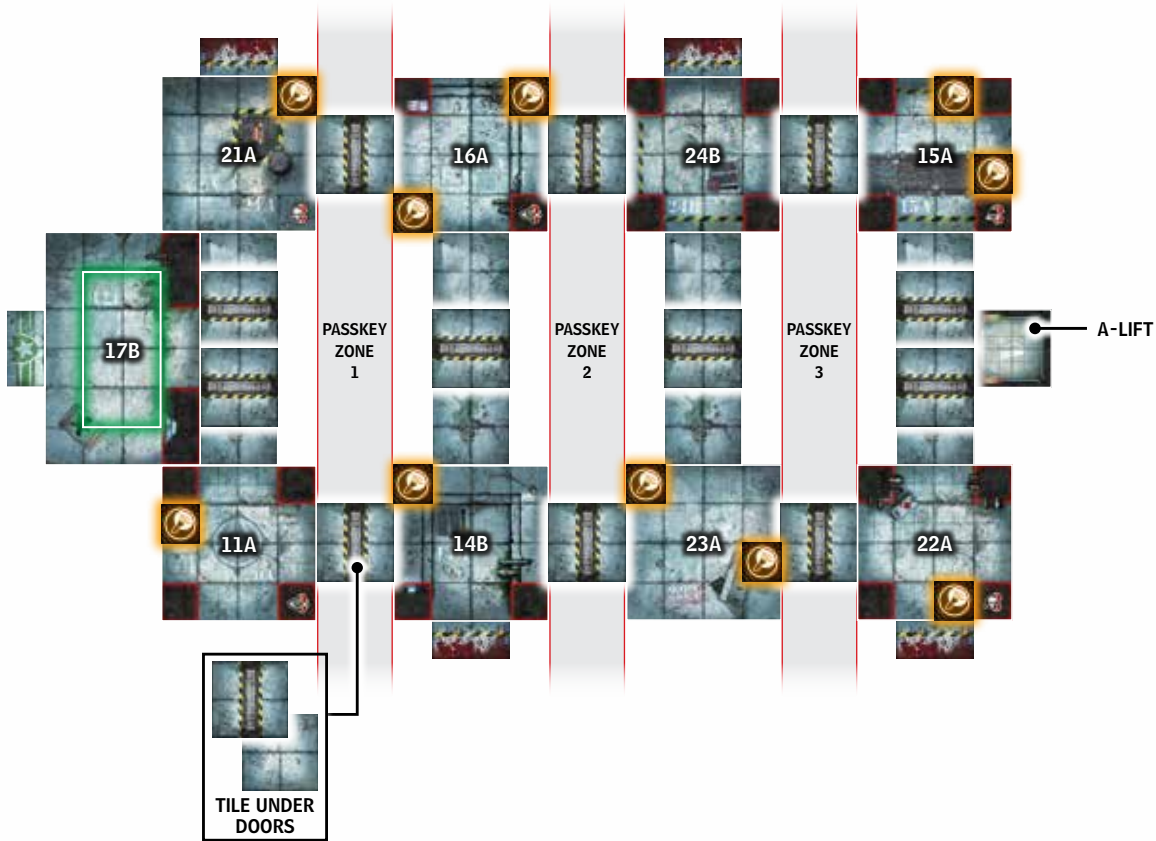
Place a room stack in every room except for the commando starting room and the A-Lift room.

OVERSEER'S DASHBOARD

Build the dashboard out of the following pieces:

- ACCELERATED RESPONSE
- CAVE IN
- CHARGE
- CLONE FLANKERS
- DODGE
- FRENZY
- GUARD PATROL
- HASTEN
- SURPRISE ATTACK

EP MISSION 1 SETUP



GAMEPLAY

Each time a guard is killed, roll a black die. If a single hit is rolled, randomly choose one of the four passkey tokens and place it facedown in the space the guard was in. Only one passkey token can be placed in this way each round. An active commando on or adjacent to a passkey token can increase his adrenaline by one to pick it up.

EVENTS

FIRST PASSKEY TOKEN PLACED

After the first passkey token is placed on the map, reduce the cost of all dashboard abilities that spawn guards by one, to a minimum of one.

THIRD PASSKEY TOKEN PLACED

After the third passkey token is placed on the map, the Speed stat of guards becomes 7.

CRISIS POINT

The Crisis Point is triggered at the start of the ninth round or when a door in passkey zone 3 is opened. After the Crisis Point is triggered, at the start of each Overseer Phase the overseer opens a door connecting a hidden room to the revealed section of the map and resolves the room's cards normally. Discard the door marker with no effect.

COMMANDO VICTORY

The commandos win if more than half of the commandos exit through the A-Lift objective tile. When a commando moves onto the A-Lift tile, remove him from the map; he has exited.

OVERSEER VICTORY

The overseer wins if he kills at least half of the commandos.

EASY MODE

Any number of passkey tokens can be placed each round.

HARD MODE

All of the commandos must exit the map in order for the commandos to win. The overseer wins as soon as one commando is killed.

EP MISSION 2: THE THING BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Dunn was right—the Russian troops are the key to opening the sealed blast hatches and doors the team periodically finds blocking their way as they move deeper into the facility. The problem is that no single soldier seems to have a master passkey. Three times already, Tin Man team has been in firefights with Russian soldiers, and in two of those their main goal was obtaining new passkeys for doors that wouldn't open to the keys they already had.

"Which way, Cheung?" Vicks asks. He steps back from the threshold of the doorway they just opened and lowers his rifle; beyond is nothing but more empty hallways, white-blue in the cold overhead lighting.

Cheung is plugged into select Ghin technology, specifically the tech that's been meshed with human machinery. He is guiding the team to the source of the jamming signal that is keeping them from getting mission guidance from Command.

"Sooner or later, this will jack me up," Cheung had confided to Vicks earlier, and the major silently agreed—anything that synchs your brain up with the Ghin has to be a mistake. He had seen how it changes a person, physically and mentally, and not for the better. Now Vicks glances over at the alien Thoth, who is waiting for the team to advance.

"Where are we going, Cheung?" he asks again, a little harsher this time.

"To hell in a handbasket," Cheung says with a grin. Met with silence, Cheung clears his throat and says, "Straight ahead, sir. End of the corridor."

The team takes up a suppressive fire formation and moves through the open doorway. Cheung had assured Vicks he could get them to all of the locations where the jamming signal was originating, but Vicks is beginning to wonder if maybe the Ghin can jam the soldier's tracking signal as well. Ever since Thoth had hinted there were other enemies nearby—but failed to disclose exactly what kind of enemies—Vicks has been fighting a nervous knot in his gut.

Deburgh was the one tasked with handling the packet of passkeys they'd been collecting. While the others provide cover, he steps up to the next door and rapidly tests each key, one after another, against the door's sensor pad.

The light on the pad turns green, and the door opens. The team is murmuring its approval over the open channel—no need to get into another firefight, at least until the next locked door presents itself—when something at the far end of the next hallway stirs. It looks up at them, then rises to its full height. Whether it's an alien guard or some sort of escaped experiment is anyone's guess, but it doesn't look like it belongs anywhere on Earth.

Its head is a misshapen skull, the top covered by implants that look fused to the bone. One eye is obscured by an ocular plate that makes Vicks think for a moment of a monocle. Tubes run from its face down its back and across its chest, disappearing around its enormous simian body. It's as tall as Dunn in her MEATSAC, wide enough that Vicks expects both its massive shoulders to brush the corridor walls as it charges them.

I hope that thing doesn't have a key we need, he thinks.

"We have a new enemy," Thoth says in Vicks' helmet.

"Think you could tell us a little sooner next time, Thoth?" Cheung says, right before the gunfire begins.

SITREP

The reason the Agency had so much difficulty tracking Cronos to this facility is the presence of a jamming system that scrambles outgoing signals. Tin Man must disable the jammer in order to report their findings and request further instructions.

SETUP

Build the map according to the EP Mission 2 Setup diagram.

RESERVES

 **ROGUE CLONES: 8**

 **WARRIOR CLONES: 6**

 **GUARDS: 10**

 **FEAR HUNTERS: 3**

 **BLASTERS: 2**

 **REJECTS: 1**

 **BRUTES: 2**

 **HANDLERS: 1**

 **WARDENS: 1**

DOOR MARKERS

Two Locked, two Jammed, and two Short Circuit.

ENERGY POOL MINIMUM

The number of commandos times two.

ROOM STACKS

Make the following eight room stacks:

- HUNTING PARTY, VENT
- GUNNERY TEAM, EMI
- BRUTE, WARDEN
- GUARD STATION, EMI
- ARMED RESPONSE, VENT
- CLONE NEST, EMI
- CORROSIVE GAS, EMI
- HANDLER, REJECT

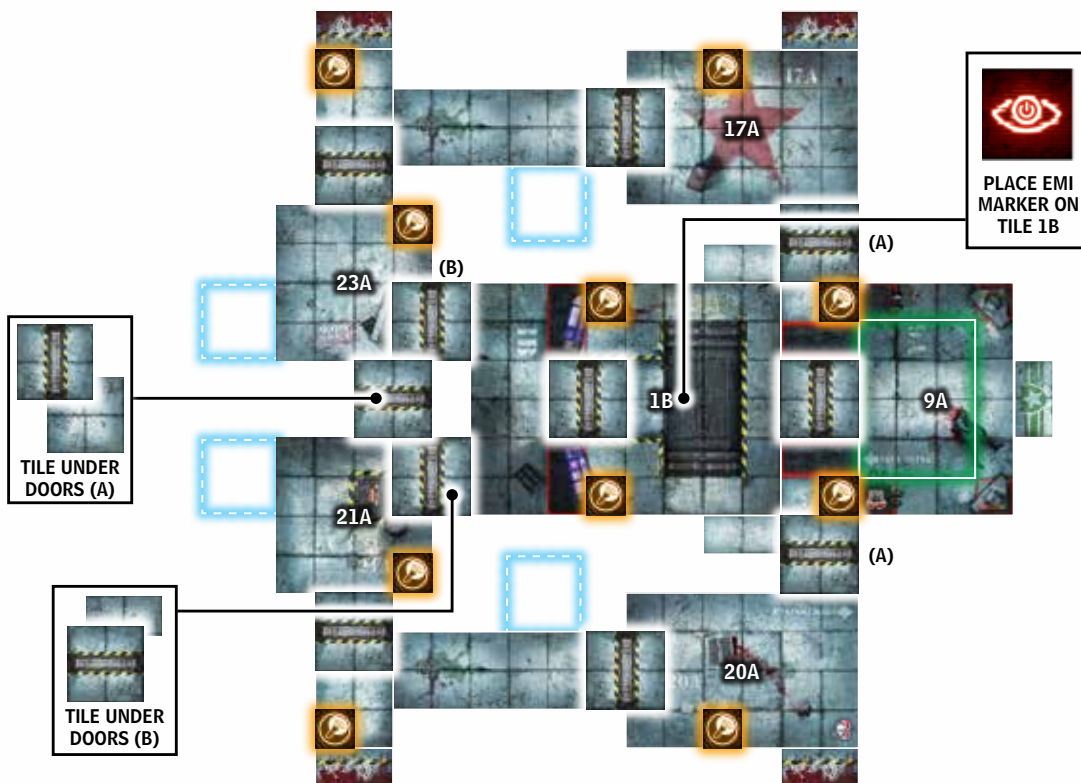
This mission uses two control panel objective tiles. For the four room stacks going into rooms with objective zones, add a clear card, a brute card, or one of the control panel objective cards. Place a room stack in every room except for the commando starting room.

OVERSEER'S DASHBOARD

Build the dashboard out of the following pieces:

- ACCELERATED RESPONSE
- BLASTER
- CHARGE
- CLONE FLANKERS
- CLONE REINFORCEMENTS
- DODGE
- FEAR HUNTER
- FRENZY
- GUARD PATROL
- HASTEN
- SURPRISE ATTACK

EP MISSION 2 SETUP



GAMEPLAY

The jammer protecting the facility is operated through two control panels. To complete this mission, the commandos must disable the jamming system by placing two objective tokens on the control panels, either two tokens on one panel or one token on each panel.

Once each turn, a commando on a control panel with no enemy figures can attempt a 4 Intelligence challenge action to place an objective token on the control panel.

If there is no objective token on the control panel, the commando must increase his adrenaline by **four** to attempt the challenge action. If the control panel already has one objective token on it, a commando must increase his adrenaline by **six** to perform the action.

EVENTS

FIRST CONTROL PANEL FOUND

After the first room containing a control panel objective is revealed, flip the commando entrance passage over onto its red side, and spawn two guards there for free.

SECOND CONTROL PANEL FOUND

After the second room containing a control panel objective is revealed, reduce the cost of all dashboard abilities that spawn guards by one, to a minimum of one, for the remainder of the game.

CRISIS POINT

The Crisis Point is triggered at the start of the eighth round or when the first objective token is placed on a control panel. Once the Crisis Point is triggered, add a black die to every guard's attack roll for the remainder of the game. In addition, at the start of each Overseer Phase, the overseer can open a door connecting a hidden room to the revealed section of the map and then resolve the room's cards normally. Discard the door marker with no effect.

COMMANDO VICTORY

The commandos win if two objective tokens are placed onto control panels.

OVERSEER VICTORY

The overseer wins if he kills more than half the commandos.

EASY MODE

The challenge actions to place a token require a 3 Intelligence challenge.

HARD MODE

The commandos cannot place two objective markers on the same control panel.

EP MISSION 3: HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

By the time Cheung steers them to the jamming device—a static variant of the Borisolgebbsk system, if Vicks heard Command right—the team has already encountered their first Ghin. Once the jammers are disabled and communication with the outside is reestablished, Vicks reports the Ghin as terminated. He also reports the monstrosity Thoth identified as a hybrid as terminated—a radical understatement, considering what the team left smeared in the corridor after shooting it more than two hundred times. The Ghin, on the other hand, went down with only one bullet.

Thoth inspects the Ghin corpse and confirms what Vicks already suspected: “Cronos has brought assistance,” he says matter-of-factly. As if he was expecting it, Vicks thinks.

“How you want us to handle this, Kansas? Tin Man over,” he asks Command as the rest of the team waits. The dead alien twitches under the fluorescent lights just a few feet ahead of them, but no one so much as looks at it. Dunn’s reaction is inscrutable; the MEATSAC isolates her from most visual exchanges. She stands like an enormous metallic statue, but he knows she and the others can all hear his question in their helmets.

“With extreme prejudice, Tin Man.” The voice from Command is jarringly cool and neutral. “Recovery of the Wiz is still the primary objective, but all talking trees should be eliminated. Kansas out.”

Dunn turns so Vicks can see her eyes in the armor—and he’s surprised to see an eager rage in them. He nods to her, cuts his transmitter, and pops his helmet. He then turns to Thoth.

“A minute, Dr. Thoth?” he says, stepping to one side. When the Ghin stares blankly at him, Vicks is forced to rephrase: “May I speak to you over here?”

Thoth joins him, and Vicks lowers his voice to a bare whisper. “You didn’t tell us you had detected any additional Ghin in this facility, Doctor.”

“I did not.” Thoth’s tone and volume remain unchanged. Both Cheung and Ford glance his way, and Cheung hefts his rifle meaningfully.

“Let’s keep it down, all right?” Vicks takes a deep breath. “So what are you saying—you didn’t know or you didn’t tell us?”

Thoth is silent. Clearly, he knows enough about us to treat that as a rhetorical question, Vicks thinks. “Either way, we have a problem now,” he says aloud. “And you’re going to help us fix it. You know where they are, right? You can sense them coming.”

“Yes.”

“Good. We’ve been ordered to take them out. So if you have some cousin in here you want to send a warning to, now would be the time.” Before Thoth can respond, he adds, “We’re back online now that the jamming’s resolved. What I want you to do right now is lead us straight to Cronos.”

“Circumstances have changed, Major,” Thoth says.

“No, we still have a mission to—”

“Now that we have been seen by a Ghin, there are no more direct paths to Dr. Cronos,” Thoth says.

Suddenly, somewhere deeper in the facility, an alarm begins to blare. Swearing through gritted teeth, Vicks is forced to turn away from the alien to organize his team for battle.

SITREP

Tin Man has discovered a large Ghin presence in the base and reported back to the Agency, which responded with new orders. Rather than continuing their covert infiltration, the team’s objective now is to “terminate the Ghin with extreme prejudice.”

The Countermeasures Specialist reports a concentration of readings indicating Ghin in the south wing of the complex.

SETUP

Build the map according to the EP Mission 3 Setup diagram.

RESERVES

 **ROGUE CLONES: 10**

 **WARRIOR CLONES: 8**

 **GUARDS: 10**

 **FEAR HUNTERS: 3**

 **BLASTERS: 2**

 **BRUTES: 2**

 **HANDLERS: 2**

 **WARDENS: 2**

DOOR MARKERS

Two Locked, two Jammed, and two Short Circuit.

ENERGY POOL MINIMUM

The number of commandos times two.

ROOM STACKS

Make the following eight room stacks:

- WARDEN, FIRE TEAM
- WARDEN, VANGUARD
- HANDLER, FLANKING PARTY
- HANDLER, BRUTE
- ARMED RESPONSE, FAULTY INTEL
- GUARD STATION, GUNNERY TEAM
- BRUTE, VENT
- FEAR HUNTER, CLONE NEST

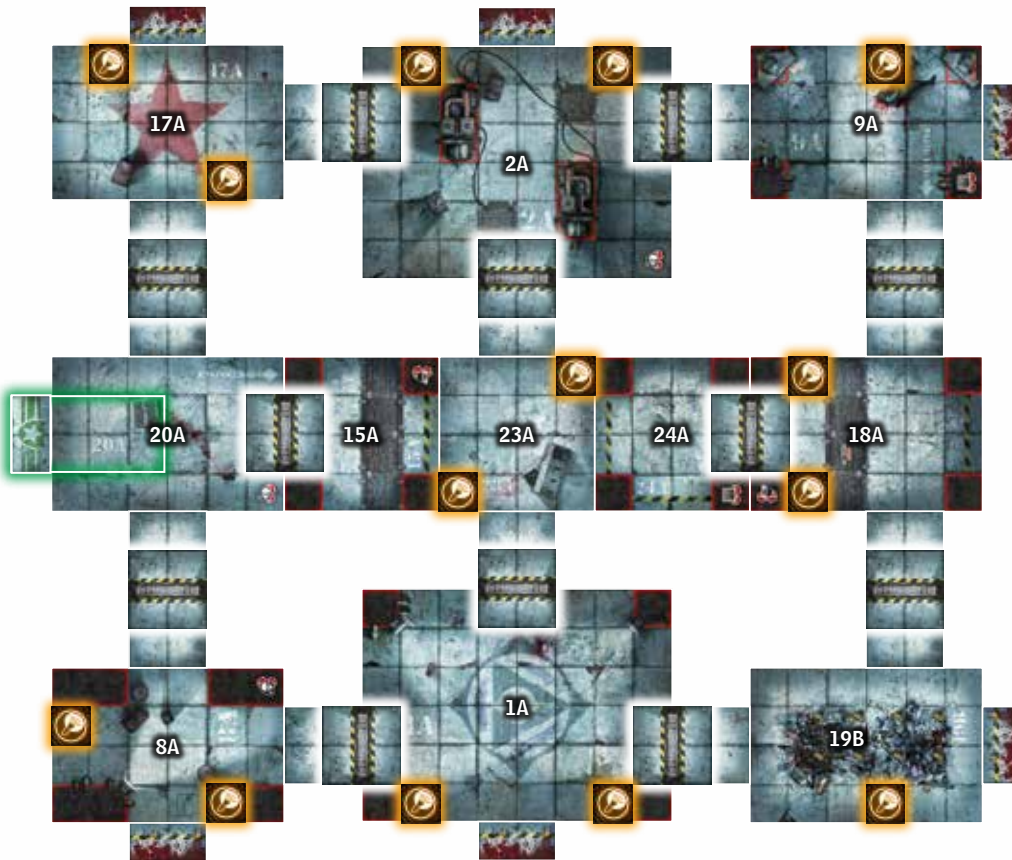
Place a room stack in every room except for the commando starting room.

OVERSEER’S DASHBOARD

Build the dashboard out of the following pieces:

- ACCELERATED RESPONSE
- BLASTER
- BRUTE
- CHARGE
- CLONE FLANKERS
- CLONE REINFORCEMENTS
- DODGE
- FEAR HUNTER
- FRENZY
- GUARD PATROL
- HASTEN
- SURPRISE ATTACK

EP MISSION 3 SETUP



GAMEPLAY

When spawning a hybrid on a tile already occupied by a Ghin, reduce the spawning cost by one, to a minimum of zero. Whenever a warden or handler is killed, the overseer rolls a die for each hybrid and clone on the same tile. If a double hit is rolled, remove that figure from the map.

EVENTS

FIRST GHIN KILLED

After the commandos have killed one Ghin, increase the energy pool minimum to three per commando.

SECOND GHIN KILLED

After the commandos have killed two Ghin, increase the energy pool minimum to four per commando.

CRISIS POINT

The Crisis Point is triggered at the start of the twelfth round or after the commandos have killed three Ghin. When the Crisis Point is triggered, reduce the cost of activating enemies by one, to a minimum of zero, for the remainder of the mission. In addition, the overseer can spend five adrenaline to open one door that connects a hidden room to the explored portion of the map at the start of each of his Activate Enemies steps and then resolve the room's cards normally. Discard the door marker with no effect.

COMMANDO VICTORY

The commandos win if they kill both wardens and both handlers.

OVERSEER VICTORY

The overseer wins if he kills all the commandos.

EASY MODE

Do not increase the energy pool minimum when the first Ghin is killed.

HARD MODE

Do not roll to remove clones and hybrids when a Ghin is killed.

EP MISSION 4: IT'S A TWISTER!

The mission has gone south.

As they scramble, one bloody fight behind them and another undoubtedly coming, Cheung says what Vicks suspects the others are all thinking.

"You think Thoth told them we were coming?" he asks of no one in particular, his voice filled with suspicion. "Why wouldn't they stick together, right?"

"Let's keep the line chatter down," Vicks says, but he silently agrees: despite Thoth's alleged tracking skills, they have encountered more Russians, more Ghin, and more monstrosities than Command had even hinted at in the pre-mission briefing. And as far as Vicks can tell, they are no closer to finding Dr. Cronos.

"Something is coming," Thoth says suddenly.

Vicks orders Tin Man to halt, and they assume a defensive stance in the empty corridor, half the team with their backs to the other half, weapons ready, Thoth in the middle.

"Report," Vicks says.

Thoth hesitates—Vicks suspects the alien doesn't like being given orders—then says, "It is approaching at high speed."

"Dammit. What's approaching? From which direction?"

Before Thoth can answer, a half-dozen Russian soldiers barrel around the corner at the far end of the corridor, racing toward Tin Man.

The team moves. Dunn pivots in the MEATSAC to assume the primary firing position, backed on either side by Cheung and Ford. Deburgh and Halestrom maintain a defense stance to guard their backs from ambush, and Vicks takes a position between both groups, with Thoth behind him.

How the hell does he sense the Russians? he wonders. He's about to give the order to open fire when he gets his answer. On the Russians' heels is a trio of grey-green hybrids, their eyes blank but their faces blood-spattered. They leave a trail of blood with their skittering claws as they pursue the soldiers. One clenches a Russian officer's hat in its teeth.

The lead Russian, a middle-aged man with thinning hair, spots Tin Man and shouts something repeatedly as he runs. Vicks hesitates.

"He's saying 'Help us,'" Dunn translates.

At the Russians, Vicks shouts, "Get the hell down!" and gestures savagely to the floor. The Russian leader shouts to his team, and they drop, rolling and turning to aim their rifles back at the hybrids.

"Take out the hybrids!" Vicks commands his own team.

A deafening roar fills the corridor as more than a dozen guns open fire; bullets ricochet off the stone walls, and Vicks' vision darkened momentarily as his optics compensated for the blinding muzzle flash. Yet the freakish humanoids keep coming, and the Russians begin to scream.

Thoth's emotionless voice fills Vicks' helmet. "Cronos is on the move."

"What? You mean he's coming here?"

"No, he is fleeing. He is trying to escape."

From behind the hybrids appears another of the hulking horrors that had taken the team so long to kill last time. It fills the corridor, wall to wall, and shoves past the stragglers to wade into the battle. The Russian screams begin to fall silent as blood colors the walls around them.

"Which way's he going?" Vicks demands. "And for God's sake don't tell me we have to go through that jerry-rigged bastard."

SITREP

By eliminating a large number of Ghin, the commandos have disrupted the enemy's control over the other creatures in the base. With many clones and hybrids out of control, fighting has broken out between the human guards and the alien beasts throughout the base. Tin Man uses the chaos to their advantage, tracking Dr. Cronos deeper into the facility.

SETUP

Build the map according to the EP Mission 4 Setup diagram.

RESERVES



ROGUE CLONES: 10



WARRIOR CLONES: 8



GUARDS: 10



FEAR HUNTERS: 3



BLASTERS: 2



REJECTS: 4



BRUTES: 2

DOOR MARKERS

Shuffle one Jammed, one Locked, and one Short Circuit door marker and draw two. Then use unlocked door markers for the remaining doors.

ENERGY POOL MINIMUM

The number of commandos times two.

ROOM STACKS

Make the following six room stacks:

- GUNNERY TEAM, RUBBLE
- HUNTING PARTY, RUBBLE
- ARMED RESPONSE, FIRE TEAM
- BRUTE, GUARD STATION
- WARDEN, ARMED RESPONSE
- CORROSIVE GAS, RECON PATROL

Place a room stack in every room except for the commando starting room.

OVERSEER'S DASHBOARD

Build the dashboard out of the following pieces:

- ACCELERATED RESPONSE
- BLASTER
- BRUTE
- CAVE IN
- CHARGE
- CLONE FLANKERS
- CLONE REINFORCEMENTS
- DODGE
- FEAR HUNTER
- FRENZY
- HASTEN
- REJECT
- SURPRISE ATTACK

EP MISSION 4 SETUP



GAMEPLAY

After each Spawn Enemies step, the overseer rolls one black die for each lift in a revealed room, starting with the A-Lift. Spawn one guard in the lift for each hit rolled.

The guards in this mission are friendly only to other guards and are activated once at the end of each Activate Enemies step for free. If the guard is more than five spaces from a ghin, clone, or hybrid, roll a black die. If a **single** hit is rolled, the highest-ranking commando player activates the guard. On any other result, the overseer activates the guard. If the guard is within five spaces of a ghin, clone, or hybrid, no roll is made and the highest-ranking commando player activates the guard.

CRISIS POINT

The Crisis Point is triggered at the start of the eighth round or after four doors have been opened. After the Crisis Point, increase the Speed stat of all enemies by one and add a black die to enemy attack rolls for the remainder of the mission.

COMMANDO VICTORY

The commandos win if more than half of the team exits the map. When a commando moves completely onto the enemy passage marker on tile 20A, remove him from the map; he has exited.

OVERSEER VICTORY

The overseer wins if he kills at least half of the commandos.

EASY MODE

When activating guards, no roll is made for guards within six spaces of a ghin, clone, or hybrid.

HARD MODE

When spawning guards, roll one red die for each lift.



EP MISSION 5: THE FALLING HOUSE

"He will not abandon his vessel," Thoth had said. "We must intercept him at the hanger."

Now, after running at top speed through seemingly endless corridors, avoiding Russian soldiers fleeing whatever horrors they had set loose, Tin Man has reached the entry to the hanger. Vicks covers Ford as the latter creeps forward for visual reconnaissance; the rest of the team guards their backs. The lights flicker with ominous regularity.

"Cronos' ship is loading," Ford mutters into his communications feed. "Weapon crates, lab equipment, a lot of stuff under tarps. Looks like the engines are not yet engaged. Hanger bay doors are opening. Soldiers like cockroaches."

"We're going to have a hard time stopping that thing once Cronos is aboard," Dunn answers.

"Then let's make sure that doesn't happen," Vicks says. "Spread out and keep a lookout for him. He can't get in here without us seeing him."

The team has just enough time to acknowledge the order before hybrids and alien clones descend on them from behind.

In moments, it's chaos. The hybrids slash into Tin Man; more monstrosities suddenly appear on the other side of the hanger and charge toward them, cutting them off from Cronos' craft. The Russian soldiers split into two groups—one allying with the monsters while the other expedites the loading of Cronos' equipment. Countless bullets ricochet around the hanger.

"Looks like the Cold War's on again," Vicks mutters, taking aim at a pair of Russians at the ship's loading ramp. They drop, one dead, one injured.

Vicks orders his team in, with the wave of monsters driving them forward. Cheung cries out as his armor absorbs the impacts of several rounds from a clone's coil gun. Halestrom and Dunn stand back to back and gun down anything that closes on them.

"They keep on coming," Cheung says. "We gotta slow 'em down."

"Bomb the doors," Vicks orders. "Halestrom, that's you. Deburgh, get his back."

The two acknowledge, but Vicks thinks it might not matter—based on the enemy presence in the hanger already, he doesn't think the team can last. They need to get out.

"Scarecrow!" Vicks shouts, taking down a hybrid charging him. He recites the team's call sequence twice, just to be sure he's heard. "We need extraction on my signal!"

An explosion rocks the hanger. A sizable section of wall comes tumbling down, filling one hallway with clouds of dust and debris. The dust filters the light and turns the hanger a wintry grey.

"Tin Man, this is Scarecrow," a calm voice says in Vicks' ear. "GEVs are waiting on your command to pick up your team."

If we still have a team, Vicks thinks. And where the hell is Cronos?

SITREP

Tin Man has cut off Dr. Cronos' escape route in a large hangar bay. This is their chance to end his menace once and for all. Unfortunately, the Ghin have regained control of the enemy forces. Hordes of alien creatures and the base's guards are converging here to help Cronos escape. Tin Man has access to limited amounts of explosives and can use them to partially seal some of the passages leading into the area in an attempt to keep from being outflanked.

SETUP

Build the map according to the EP Mission 5 Setup diagram.

RESERVES

 **ROGUE CLONES: 10**

 **WARRIOR CLONES: 8**

 **GUARDS: 6**

 **FEAR HUNTERS: 3**

 **BLASTERS: 2**

 **REJECTS: 4**

 **BRUTES: 2**

 **HANDLERS: 2**

 **WARDENS: 2**

DOOR MARKERS

Door markers are not used in this mission.

ENERGY POOL MINIMUM

The number of commandos times three.

ROOM STACKS

Make the following five room stacks:

- ARMED RESPONSE, RECON PATROL, BLASTER
- ARMED RESPONSE, VANGUARD, BRUTE
- FLANKING PARTY, RECON PATROL, FEAR HUNTER
- VANGUARD, FIRE TEAM, BRUTE
- REJECT, REJECT, REJECT

Add a handler, a warden, or the Dr. Cronos card to each room stack.

There are no rooms in this mission. Place the room stacks near the dashboard instead of on the map.

OVERSEER'S DASHBOARD

Build the dashboard out of the following pieces:

- ACCELERATED RESPONSE
- BLASTER
- BRUTE
- CAVE IN
- CHARGE
- CLONE FLANKERS
- DODGE
- FEAR HUNTER
- FRENZY
- HASTEN
- REJECT
- SURPRISE ATTACK

EP MISSION 5 SETUP



GAMEPLAY

The commandos divide the bomb markers among themselves at the start of the mission. Each commando can carry a maximum of two bomb markers.

A commando with a bomb marker can increase his adrenaline by two to partially seal an adjacent enemy passage with a bomb. When a commando takes this action, he places one of the bomb markers he is carrying under the passage tile.

At the start of each Spawn Enemies step, the overseer chooses a room stack and spawns the enemies on the cards within three spaces of one enemy passage without a bomb marker. The overseer must choose the stack with Dr. Cronos on or before the fourth round.

EVENTS

THIRD ROOM STACK SPAWNED

At the end of the round in which the overseer spawns the third room stack, the energy pool minimum is increased to the number of commandos times four.

CRISIS POINT

The Crisis Point is triggered at the start of the game.

GAME END

The game ends at the end of the eighth round.

COMMANDO VICTORY

The commandos win if they kill Dr. Cronos.

OVERSEER VICTORY

The overseer wins if he kills all of the commandos or if the game ends before Cronos is killed.

EASY MODE

Using a bomb marker requires a commando to increase his adrenaline by one.

HARD MODE

Using a bomb marker requires a 3 Intelligence challenge.

EPILOGUE

As Vicks turns to scan the hanger for their target, Dunn's voice fills his helmet. "There he is! Confirmed ID on the Wiz!"

He looks over as Dunn in her MEATSAC breaks away from the hybrids to thunder across the bay, her armor deflecting Russian bullets as she closes on Dr. Cronos. The Ghin is slipping patiently between battles, slinking, always moving closer to his aircraft.

Dunn unloads her barrage pod, a meteor storm of small-scale rockets launching from her shoulder. More explosions rip in a jagged line between her and Cronos.

She feels it too, Vicks thinks. This rage. But she's going to kill him, and that's not the mission.

Vicks is about to shout her down and order her to rein it in when a second massive horror, easily as big as the one Tin Man encountered earlier, rushes out of the dust clouds behind the Ghin, its roar reverberating in Vicks' helmet. Cronos seems to have no fear of the beast; he simply ducks behind one of the tarp-covered crates as Dunn opens fire again, and the monstrosity passes right by him to rush Dunn.

"Careful, Dunn! Don't kill Cronos!" Vicks yells.

The ship's engines suddenly engage, and dust clouds swirl like hurricanes in the enclosed hanger. With the unexpected rush of air at its back, the monster closes on Dunn faster than she expects. As it reaches her, she unloads both of her rifles at nearly point-blank range. The things falls toward her. A second explosion shakes the hanger, and another wall crashes down.

Amid the turmoil, Vicks sees the alien rise from his hiding place. He quickly scans the hangar, but most of his team is nowhere to be seen in the pervasive haze. Dunn has her hands full. It's just him.

Vicks breaks into a run, racing across the hanger. If he doesn't stop Cronos, no one will. Cronos sees him and pauses, staring. Everything else slows to a crawl. Pieces of the monster arc above Dunn in slow motion as she shoots it again with both guns. The disorienting wind from the ship's engines becomes a distant background hum. Vicks can hear his own sharp breaths as he looks into the black, pitiless eyes of the alien that betrayed the SSA, betrayed the United States. Killed Disco Team.

Vicks stops running. Maybe he doesn't make it out alive after all, he thinks. Maybe he takes a stray bullet. Or a lot of them.

But he doesn't get the chance to fire. The three enemy bullets catch him in different places. One pings off the side of his helmet, but the sound inside is painfully loud. The second catches him full in the shoulder, driving him forward. The third punches him the back, and the pain explodes as he falls forward, his rifle pinned beneath him.

He lifts his head, dazed, and watches as Cronos' craft rolls out the hanger doors and into the night.

"Vicks!" A voice in his helmet, a voice from far away. It's Dunn. She's bending down over him. "He's gone, Major. And the Russians are getting the hell out of Dodge, too."

He doesn't answer right away, and Dunn calls for Deburgh. "Vicks is down. He needs a medic."

"On my way," Deburgh answers. "Don't let him die before I get there."

"I won't, dammit," Vicks says, his voice low and raspy. He struggles to a sitting position, and Dunn helps put him back on his feet. He can see her face through her helmet: she's as livid, and as tired, as he is.

"Belay that, Deburgh," Vicks says. "Check on Cheung—he took a bad hit. I'll be all right if there's anything left for me to kill."

Now, he knows, he has to do what he can to consolidate the team and clean up the mess.



They've escaped.

Vicks gets the word from Command—presumably via Command's intel agents at the Agency—while he and the rest of the team are still securing the hanger in the aftermath of the battle. He acknowledges without emotion.

With Cronos gone, the various horrors the Ghin have been developing with the Russians are more easily defeated or driven back into the facility. Cleanup crews will come in to deal with them. For their part, the Russians offer no resistance; they're abandoning their positions almost as quickly as the alien monsters.

"We are securing the cargo," Vicks says to Command as he approaches Cheung, who sits with his back to a wall. The young man's face is already pale as Deburgh assesses and cleans the wounds along the side of his head.

"Am I dead yet?" Cheung asks. Vicks just grins at him. Then another voice, deadly serious, cuts into his Command channel.

"Major," Dunn says, "you need to see this. Now."

Vicks crosses the ruined hanger at a run. One of the longer containers has been opened, and Dunn, Ford, and Halestrom stand looking down at its contents. Gases billow over the sides like dry ice.

Vicks sees it isn't just a crate—it's some sort of specialized casket, wired and equipped with a high-tech external panel inscribed with a mix of Cyrillic script and imagery he's never seen before. He looks inside.

"Oh no," he breathes.

None of the team moves; somewhere nearby, Deburgh announces the arrival of the extraction GEVs, but Vicks doesn't register the specifics. Thoth silently glides up among them as they stare down at the body in the box. The Ghin says something in his own language, then drifts away again between two other crates of similar size and shape. As Vicks watches the Ghin go, he thinks back to that meeting in Deputy Director Fallows' conference room, where Thoth did not say a single word about the forthcoming mission. Not one word. Now he wonders if Thoth could have told them then what they would find here. How much did Thoth know about all this?

Vicks clears his throat. "Tin Man to Command. Disco Team is no longer MIA. We just found them."

He looks at the other two boxes, then back down at the body of Sergeant DeGroot. Tubes from his skull and chest run to a control panel attached to the casket. Needles attached to diagnostic readers are scattered all across his naked flesh. Vicks is reminded of the disturbing number of funerals he's attended over the years and how the corpse always looked fake, like a mannequin with makeup and wig, a shell of the human being who had walked in that skin. But DeGroot doesn't look like that—he looks surprisingly healthy, given what his captors must have been doing to the man. To the test subject, he corrects himself.

"At least, we found whatever's left of them." The group stands looking around at the bloody battle scene, at the box on the ground.

Suddenly, DeGroot opens his eyes and looks up at them. And smiles.

"How'd we do?" he asks.

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